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SUBJECT: INVESTIGATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, CRIMINAL ACTIVITY AT COLONIA DIGNIDAD

REF: SANTIAGO 1847 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: CONSUL GENERAL SEAN MURPHY

¶1. In a December 19 meeting with Consul General to discuss the investigation of the 1985 disappearance of U.S. citizen Boris Weisfeiler, Judge Jorge Zepeda shared information about the broader aspects of his investigation of human rights abuses and criminal activity at the German religious colony south of Santiago formerly known as Colonia Dignidad, now Villa Baviera.

¶2. Zepeda said that his investigation has conclusively established that opponents of the Pinochet regime were taken to Colonia Dignidad by the DINA (secret police) to be interrogated and tortured. In some cases, prisoners were murdered at Colonia Dignidad by DINA agents with the active collaboration of the Colony's security force. He said these activities occurred primarily in the immediate aftermath of the 1973 coup and again in the late 1970s and early 1980s, coinciding with an upsurge in anti-Pinochet activities. Zepeda said that recent excavations at Colonia Dignidad had discovered indications that human remains, likely belonging to murdered political prisoners, had been buried in common graves and subsequently removed. He said he had firm evidence concerning five political opponents of the regime who had been tortured, murdered, and buried at Colonia Dignidad. Sometime in the late 1980s or early 1990s, as international attention on human rights abuses at Colonia Dignidad intensified, colony security officials had exhumed the bodies, cremated them, and dumped the ashes into a nearby river.

¶3. Zepeda described Colonia's Dignidad's relationship with the then Chilean security apparatus as extensive and intimate. He showed the Consul General a photograph of Schaffer on a night time hunting expedition on colony property with DINA head Manuel Contreras (convicted in 2004 of killing a regime political opponent and sentenced along with four other former DINA officials to twelve years in prison). Zepeda said that connections such as these allowed Colonia Dignidad to function with near impunity well into Chile's democratic transition period. He showed the Consul General still photos from a 1995/1995 video of the arrival at the Colony's airstrip of an unidentified VIP aboard a small plane painted in camouflage colors and bearing what Zepeda said were German identification numbers on its fuselage. The VIP is seen being warmly greeted by Schaffer and a large crowd of colonists. According to Zepeda, voices on the video can be heard joking that the plane and its passengers did not pass through any Chilean inspection process upon arrival. Zepeda said he has referred the matter to Chilean civil aviation authorities for investigation.

¶4. Colonia Dignidad founder Paul Schaffer, returned from Argentina earlier this year to face child abuse charges, has refused to cooperate with any aspect of the investigation, Zepeda said. He added that Schaffer receives legal guidance from Argentinian lawyers previously involved in representing

persons implicated in the bombings of the Israeli Embassy and the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires. Zepeda said that his investigation has discovered extensive additional evidence of child abuse at the colony, some involving bestiality.

¶ 5. Zepeda said that he hopes to conclude his investigation by the end of January. Between now and then, pursuing leads in the Weisfeiler investigation will be a major focus of the investigation. He is also pursuing remaining leads about arms trafficking and the possible illegal importation of weapons.

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